

Killarney LODGE 2006



Welcome to the Lodge!

We hope you had a wonderful winter – with your full share of joyful surprises and accomplishments.

No matter what the year presented, we hope you enjoyed it. That's the trick, isn't it? Enjoying life as it speeds along.

But have you noticed the current interest in slowing things down? Magazine articles and how-to books about simplifying life are everywhere, as well as advice on how to make, find and stretch time. There's even a slow-cooking movement.

"For heaven's sake," our forebears would scoff. "Imagine having to justify making a pot of soup from scratch." But we think there's something to slowing down – experiencing more by doing less.

Every year, we see guests arrive tired and stressed, even (dare we say it?) a little cranky. But after just one day, they're definitely more relaxed and showing their lighter side. By the time they leave, many people look five to 10 years younger – and they feel it!

So, come to enjoy – and relax. Let us do the cooking from scratch, while you look after slowing things down. We hope to see you soon!

Doing the Canadian thing

Guests often come to Killarney Lodge looking for the quintessential Canadian experience, but few are as enthusiastic as the disarming young couple last July from Milan, Italy. Having found us through a guidebook, they were eager to do all things Canadian, and very excited to be in Algonquin Park.

The two Milanese admired the log cabins, savoured our butter tarts, and were awestruck by the moose head in the Lounge. They marveled at the hummingbirds, and reveled in the Park landscape, heading off for hikes every morning.

"Do we look Canadian?" they called while paddling a canoe for the first time. "Yes!" we replied, giving the universal thumbs-up.

While Canadians may debate what is uniquely Canadian, our foreign visitors are often quite clear. It usually involves nature – preferably resembling a Group of Seven painting – and a canoe.

Brownies and pan-fried pickarel, log cabins and a stone fireplace are just icing on the Canadian cake.



Jay goes basic in Thailand.

Star light, star bright

We're always honoured when guests share special events such as anniversaries and birthdays with us, and we try to make them memorable. Last Thanksgiving, Douglas Counter and his sister Carol arrived with her husband and sons – and an enormous telescope.

Douglas and their father, Victor Counter, had loved the Lodge and Algonquin Park. But Victor had passed away in July (following his wife by ten years.) For the first Thanksgiving without their father, Douglas and Carol decided to return to Killarney Lodge.

One night, they set up the telescope on the beach and searched the northeast sky for the Perseus constellation. There, in a constellation that means "hero," they found the two stars they'd had named after their parents – right next to each other.



The quintessential Canadian experience -- with style!

Dig right in

A sense of belonging often keeps guests coming back – to enjoy friends they met the year before, take a proprietary stroll around the grounds, even strap on a tool belt or lead a nature walk.

While some gardeners can't resist a little weeding or "deadheading" on the way to breakfast, others go further. They bring gardening clothes and – despite the risk of being mistaken for staff – dig right in (*sic*).

Some, such as Cathy and Doug Robinson, leave something behind, to take root.

The Robinsons honeymooned at the Lodge in 1995. To celebrate their tenth anniversary, they returned with a lovely pair of *dicentra spectabilis* – bleeding heart plants. The plants, now snuggled between the cosmos and the cleome in the garden near Cabin 10, are doing well.

Jay & Mel's great adventure

In January, chef Jay Picard and his wife Melanie packed up their kids, left their comfortable Huntsville home, and flew half a world away to Thailand.

Their destination was a small village called Ban Nem Khem, which the Asian tsunami devastated on Boxing Day 2004. They stayed four months, making many Thai and Burmese friends while helping to rebuild homes and schools.

They had – to say the least – an eye-opening time.

"Nothing can prepare you for the devastation," said Melanie. "A year later, debris is still washing up on shore."

While the children generally took the experience in stride, Megg (8) was concerned to see people sleeping on concrete floors, and liked bringing fresh food to her neighbours. Jake (5) worried about children riding bicycles without helmets. He also wanted to adopt all the stray dogs, convincing his parents to buy food and bowls for his favourites.

Seeing people who had so little gave the family a greater appreciation of all the things we take for granted, Melanie said. In missives back to Canada, she challenged her Huntsville neighbours to raise \$20,000 by donating a looney each.

We admired their initiative, supported their effort and wondered – a little hopefully – if we would taste a Thai influence this summer.

You otter see this

We must be doing something right. In addition to the loons, ducks, chipmunks, hummingbirds and woodpeckers established at the Lodge, we also have martens fishing from our shoreline rocks, and some very articulate bullfrogs laying claim to the beach.

We've spotted osprey and hawks, as well as turtles, salamanders, red squirrels and rabbits. Plus the usual cast of moose, deer and Canada geese. Sometimes, on quiet mornings, a little red fox darts through the shadows. And we know there's a beaver, because it keeps making off with our saplings!

Last summer, we added otters to our house list when Poppy spotted three of them. One was near the raft, floating on his back and eating clams.

Otters, or *lutra canadensis*, are more playful than most wild animals, wrestling and chasing other otters, tossing and diving for rocks and clamshells. Look for them from early evening to early morning.

Recycling, naturally

It was only natural for Algonquin Park to start recycling bottles, cans and paper a few years ago. Last year the Park started collecting cardboard, plant and food waste, and so did we.

Jay and the maintenance guys designed an inconspicuous recycling centre, complete with spring-loaded doors, dividers, compartments and even entry slots for cardboard. The sturdy little structure contains all our refuse and has, so far, confounded local beasties looking for an easy lunch.

It has also made garbage days easier, though it took time for kitchen staff to get used to separating packaging from foodstuffs as they worked. But they're pleased with the results.

"It feels good to know that our food waste will be composted," says Eric. "And, because the stuff is taken to Pembroke, we know it's not affecting wildlife patterns in the Park."

Algonquin Park management liked our design so much that they are using it as a model for other park services, including stores and campgrounds.

It's the little things

As a small, family-run operation, we take pleasure in making Killarney Lodge feel homey. We decorate each cabin with personal touches and extras that take our fancy and please our guests.

Visitors often remark on the birchbark menus, strategically placed hummingbird feeders, art and quirky objects they find around the Lodge.

In the last year, we've added a touch of elegance to the dinner settings. As well as fresh flowers and candles, you'll find heavy white linen napkins on the table. A bit of

luxury to complement your meal after a day in the woods or on the lake.



Some of the Lodge staff who make it just so.

We're also placing a basket of Aveda spa products, made of natural and high-quality ingredients, in each cabin. We couldn't just buy Aveda toiletries; we had to apply for permission! Now *that's* special.

Foobles and things

For some time, we've wondered about our resin deck chairs. Yes, they're practical and even comfortable, but somehow they don't quite suit. We'd prefer wooden chairs designed to look good on a deck, by a cabin, overlooking a lake in Algonquin Park. Chairs such as the ones designed and produced by Ian and Sandy Mackie of Roseneath, Ontario.

The Mackies, who run the Jardinique studio, produce simple, but elegant (and foldable!) armchairs and tables from ash wood. They also make "foobles," a combination footstool/side table.

Poppy ordered several at the One of a Kind Craft Show in Toronto last fall, and more this spring. Enjoy!



Looking to get busy?

During two of the seasons that the Lodge is open, nature plays with us. Look away in spring, and a bud opens. Turn around in fall, and a tree erupts into colour. In summer, nature slows down, and things look pretty much as you left them the day before.

But *you* can still get busy! Organized park activities include theatre productions (sometimes featuring the ghosts of Canoe Lake!), night walks and wolf howls. Or take a two-hour Zodiac trip on Lake Opeongo, and learn about aquatic research.

Choose from a variety of guided walks, and discover the secret world of insects, ferns, trees and beavers. The campground across from our bay even offers regular how-to canoe and kayak programs.

Algonquin Park's free information newspaper lists rainy-day and other suggestions such as the Visitors' Centre, Logging Museum and Art Gallery. For more activity ideas, just ask at our front desk.

Closer to home

When Cabin 8 began to tilt two years ago and we couldn't keep it for guests, we still thought it worth saving. So we moved it, and waited for inspiration. Then Poppy bought a few paintings from local artist Ketha Newman for the Lounge, and it hit us: Why not make the cabin into a small gallery?

So we installed track lighting last year and had a little display unit built.

For this year, we've invited international photographer Tony Hauser to show his



Killarney caps and fleeces made a popular debut last year.

work. We'll also have oil paintings by Brian Kelly, etchings by Greg Shafley and watercolours by Ketha.

Poppy, who always enjoys finding handcrafted treasures, is adding ceramics made near Skeleton Lake, hand-knit sweaters from Newfoundland, carved birds from Prince Edward Island and found glass objects from Ottawa.

Dogs show good breeding

Last year, for the first time in 20 years, guests were invited to bring their dogs: only good dogs, only until June 23, and only in specific cabins. "This was an experiment," we said a little nervously.

The experiment was a complete and absolute success! Dogs and their owners behaved impeccably: no barking or yapping, no surprises in the grass – or cabins – and no dogs were seen west of the parking lot. Most guests never knew dogs were on the property.

We didn't receive a single complaint from guests or housekeepers. Not one. (And you were worried.)

This year the same guidelines apply, but dogs will be welcome the *entire* season. If you'd like more information, call us, or check our website.

Samantha pursues studies in Africa

This spot in our newsletter is usually devoted to Eric's travels, but since we last wrote, daughter Samantha has clearly earned it.

Now in third-year biology at Bishop's University, Sam spent a semester in eastern Africa doing field studies in Uganda, Kenya and Tanzania. She followed red columbus monkeys through the jungle learning about the effects of the global market and industrialization on protected natural areas.

She, her professor and 39 other students saw some of the most spectacular places in the world, including Mt. Kilimanjaro and the Serengeti Plains.

Her emails home were breathless: "Our hotel overlooked the Nile!!!" "... went on a boat tour and saw elephants!!!" "... can't swim in most lakes because there are worms!" "... couldn't go out at night because lions were practically outside our door!!!"

As it happened, Eric did return to the Durand Glacier in British Columbia and had a fabulous time ski-mountaineering. But there's no doubt Sam earned the travel spot – this year.



Between two worlds



We'll need a wider net

Not long ago, when the kids told us they were going somewhere, it meant a friend's house or the hockey rink. Perhaps the mall, or a movie theatre.

Now, we have to start checking what country they're in. During school break this year, Alexandra was in Cuba, celebrating high school graduation with chums. Charlotte was in Hawaii with her best friend's family. And Samantha was in Africa, studying.

Jonathan was in Florida with us, visiting family – but we didn't always know where he was!

At home, Alexandra (17) is still intensely social, juggling school and extracurricular activities, and talking with friends on MSN. Fashion is still a passion: a subscription to *Vogue* magazine as a birthday

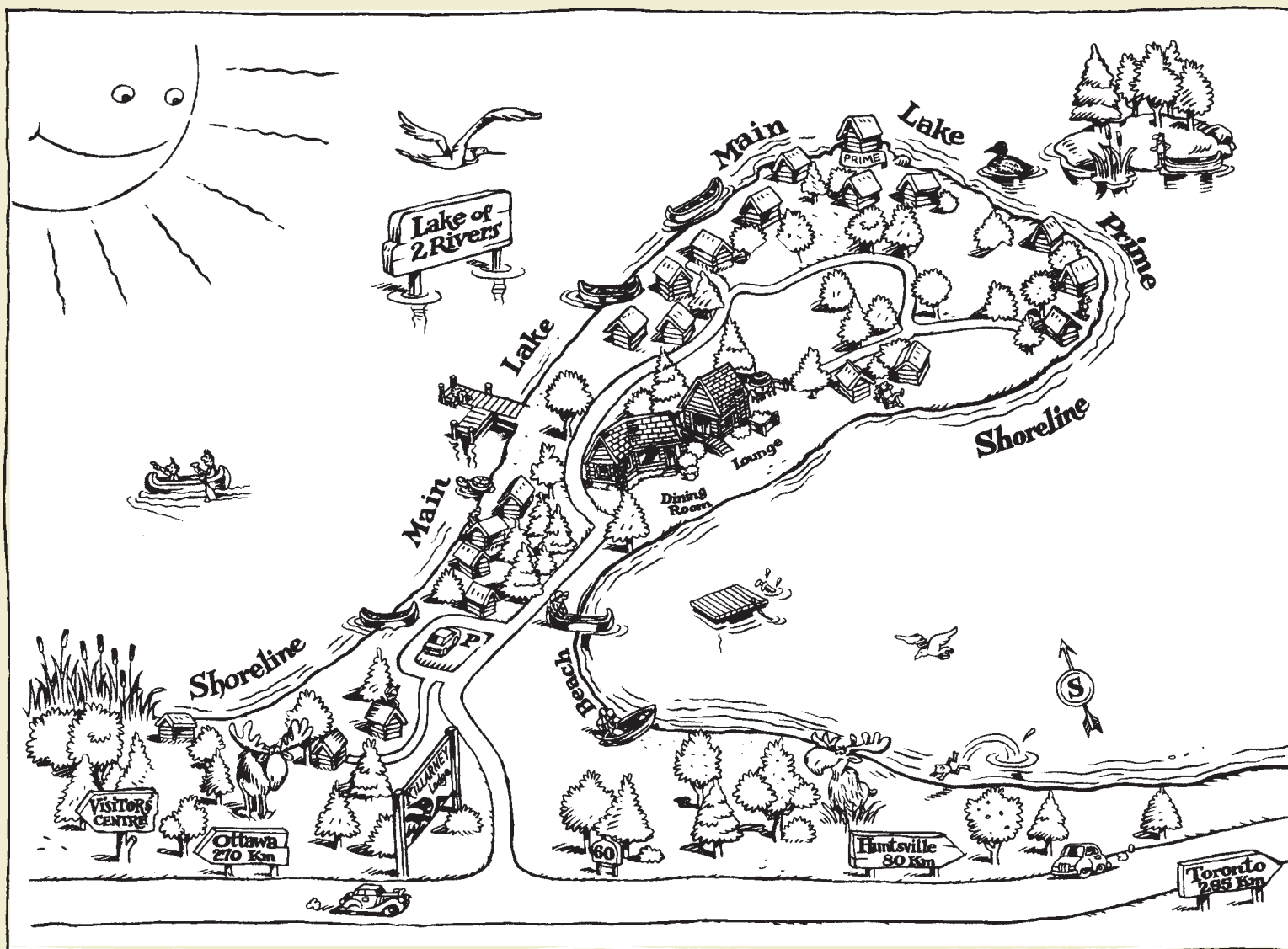
present elicited the comment, "Now my life is complete." Despite a busy life – she played a lead role in her school play and mentored new students – Alex still loves to read and plans to study English at university next year. She'll be teaching drama at Camp Tanamakoon this summer.

Charlotte (16) and Alexandra are great pals and love to fool around together. But though Charlotte shared the stage with her sister (also in a lead role), and will be a CIT (counselor-in-training) at Camp Tanamakoon this summer, she has her own quieter, albeit humorous style. This year, Char also helped her field hockey team win the Toronto-area championship and got a part-time job. She still loves history and art, but relishes doing mathematical Sudoku puzzles. Charlotte was considering taking astronomy at university – until the tough physics requirement sent her back to the drawing board.

Jonathan (15) will always be youngest, but now he's tallest, and frequently asks Poppy and his sisters about the weather "down there." We expect he'll surpass Eric soon, and then be totally insufferable. Actually, even his teachers admit he's a really nice kid – if only he would settle down! The house shakes, rattles and rolls when he brings buddies over after school. But his hockey coaches appreciated his energy and commitment. Not only was he first on the ice, four or five times a week, but after switching from defence to forward, he started scoring goals. Jonathan also loves Sudoku, and is learning to be a master poker player.

Wherever the kids are, we'll be at Killarney to welcome you. We hope you can join us!

Eric & Poppy



A fanciful map to help you get your bearings at Killarney Lodge.

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